

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 103426

INFORM CONSULS

FOLLOWING REPEAT PARIS 13210 ACTION SECSTATE USIA USLO PEKING
CINCPAC LONDON USMISSION USUN NEW DELHI MOSCOW MAY 05.
QUOTE UNCLAS PARIS 13210

STATE FOR EA AND S/PRS/CARTER; USIA FOR IOP/IBS, IPS,
IEA; PASS WHITE HOUSE/SCHecter: STATE PLEASE PASS ALL
EA DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS: CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, VN, US

SUBJECT: PRESS CONFERENCE

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN BY
MORTON SMITH, SPOKESMAN FOR THE AMERICAN DELEGATION
HEADED BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY RICHARD HOLBROOKE, AT THE
PARIS TALKS ON VIETNAM, AMERICAN EMBASSY, MAY 4.

BEGIN TEXT

1. SPOKESMAN: FIRST, I THINK I'D BETTER INTRODUCE
MYSELF. I DON'T KNOW MOST OF YOU. I AM MORTON SMITH.
I AM THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER FOR THE EAST ASIA
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BUREAU OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT. I WORK VERY CLOSELY
WITH DICK HOLBROOKE AS THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS ADVISOR FOR
THE BUREAU. I DON'T HAVE A STATEMENT. I JUST HAVE A
FEW COMMENTS TO MAKE; A FEW OBSERVATIONS AND THEN I'LL
BE HAPPY TO TRY AND ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS. WE JUST
FINISHED ABOUT SEVEN HOURS OF TALKS WITH THE VIETNAMESE
OVER A TWO DAY PERIOD. WE DISCUSSED MANY MATTERS
OF MUTUAL INTEREST. WE THOUGHT THE TALKS WERE CORDIAL,
FRANK. WE FEEL THAT THEY WERE USEFUL AND CONSTRUCTIVE.
WE AGREED TO MEET AGAIN IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS AND WE WILL

BE MEETING HERE AT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY. WE THANKED THE VIETNAMESE FOR THEIR HOSPITALITY AND FOR THE EXCELLENT FACILITIES THEY MADE AVAILABLE TO US AT THEIR NEW EMBASSY BUILDING. WE APPROACHED THESE TALKS WITH GOOD WILL AND WITH SERIOUSNESS OF INTENT AND WE INTEND TO DO THE SAME IN THE UPCOMING TALKS AS WELL. I THINK THAT'S ALL I HAVE TO SAY AT THIS POINT, AND I WILL BE HAPPY TO TRY AND ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS.

2. Q. MR. PHAM HIEN READ WHAT HE SAID WAS A JOINT COMMUNIQUE BY THE TWO DELEGATIONS WHICH GAVE A LOT OF DETAILS WHICH YOU ARE NOT GIVING US. IF THERE IS A JOINT COMMUNIQUE COULD YOU GIVE US THE TEXT OF IT?

A. THERE IS NO JOINT COMMUNIQUE. THAT IS JUST A SLIGHT ERROR. WHAT HE READ TO YOU WAS THEIR STATEMENT. WE HAVE NO STATEMENT - JUST MADE SOME COMMENTS. I WILL BE HAPPY TO SPEAK TO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ISSUES WHICH WERE RAISED IN HIS STATEMENT, IF YOU LIKE.

3. Q. DO YOU AGREE WITH EVERYTHING THAT WAS SAID IN THE VIETNAMESE STATEMENT?

A. WELL, I DON'T HAVE THE EXACT STATEMENT AS THEY DELIVERED IT. SO WHY DON'T YOU ASK ME A SPECIFIC QUESTION AND I'LL TRY TO GIVE YOU A SPECIFIC ANSWER.

4. Q. WELL, I BELIEVE THE STATEMENT SAID THAT THERE
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WAS DEFINITE PROGRESS TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND VIETNAM.

A. WELL, WE THINK THERE WAS SOME PROGRESS, YES.

5. DO YOU EXPECT THOSE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS TO HAPPEN SOON, AND HOW DO YOU DEFINE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS?

A. WE DON'T HAVE ANY TIMETABLE AND I DON'T THINK ANYONE IS IN A POSITION TO PROVIDE ONE ON EITHER SIDE. NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS MEANS JUST WHAT IT MEANS IN THE COMMONLY ACCEPTED TERM.

6. Q. MR. SMITH, DID VIETNAM ASK DURING THE TALKS FOR 4.75 BILLION DOLLARS FROM THE UNITED STATES?

A. NO, THE ISSUE DID NOT COME UP.

7. Q. A PRICE WAS NEVER MENTIONED - A DOLLAR FIGURE?

A. THAT'S RIGHT.

8. Q. HOW DID IT COME UP - IN WHAT CURRENCY DID IT COME UP?

A. CURRENCY WAS NOT MENTIONED.

9. Q. WELL, I UNDERSTAND THAT AT THE VIETNAMESE BRIEFING

IT WAS STATED THAT VIETNAM FELT THAT IT SHOULD HAVE NOT ONLY THE 2.5 BILLION DOLLARS MENTIONED IN THE NIXON

LETTER TO PHAM VAN DONG BUT ANOTHER BILLION AND A HALF IN VIETNAMESE ASSETS UNDER AMERICAN CONTROL. A. HERE I THINK THAT SOME OF THE FIGURES ARE QUITE INACCURATE.

10. Q. MAY I RESTATE THAT QUESTION - I WAS AT THE CONFERENCE. HE SAID 3.25 BILLION IN THE NIXON LETTER AS AID PLUS 1 TO 1.5 BILLION UNDER ANOTHER CHAPTER APPEARING IN THE NIXON LETTER AS CONCESSIONAL. UNCLASSIFIED

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SIONAL. THE QUESTION OF ASSETS WAS ASKED SEPARATELY. HE SAID HIS FIGURE FOR VIETNAMESE ASSETS IN THE UNITED STATES WAS 150 MILLION.

A. OK. THERE ARE A COUPLE OF PARTS TO THE QUESTION. FIRST, I HAVE NO PRECISE FIGURE ON VIETNAMESE ASSETS BECAUSE IT'S HARD TO GET A PRECISE READING SO I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING PRECISE ON THAT. WITH REGARD TO THE NIXON LETTER. THE NIXON LETTER DID NOT COME UP IN OUR CONVERSATIONS.

11. Q. HE SAID THAT HE ASKED THE AMERICAN DELEGATION IF THEY WERE AWARE AND THAT THE ANSWER WAS YES, THAT YOU WERE AWARE OF IT.

A. WE ARE AWARE. . .

12. Q. DID HE NOT ASK. . .

A. THE NIXON LETTER DID NOT COME UP.

13. Q. YOU SAY THE STATEMENT THAT HE JUST MADE IS INCORRECT?

A. I'M SAYING THE NIXON LETTER DID NOT COME UP IN OUR CONVERSATIONS.

14. Q. DID THE FIGURES COME UP?

A. THE FIGURES DID NOT COME UP.

15. Q. WHAT CAME UP?

A. WHAT CAME UP WAS A STATEMENT OF THE VIETNAMESE VIEW THAT WE HAD RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROVIDING ASSISTANCE.

16. Q. COULD YOU JUST ANSWER ONE QUESTION FOR FRENCH TELEVISION? WHAT AMOUNT OF MONEY ARE THE UNITED STATES PREPARED TO GRANT VIETNAM TO RECONSTRUCT THE COUNTRY? COULD YOU JUST TELL US THAT IN COMPLETE TERMS?

A. WELL, YOU ARE GOING MUCH BEYOND THE FACTS AS THEY EXIST. WE MADE CLEAR TO THE VIETNAMESE WHEN THE MATTER UNCLASSIFIED

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OF AID WAS RAISED, WE MADE CLEAR TO THEM THE PRESIDENT'S POSITION - PRESIDENT CARTER'S POSITION ABOUT AID, AND THE LEGISLATIVE PROHIBITIONS AGAINST AID TO VIETNAM WHICH EXIST AT THIS TIME. WE TOOK NOTE OF THE VIETNAMESE VIEW ON THIS MATTER AND THAT'S WHERE IT STANDS.

17. Q. MR. SMITH, THE VIETNAMESE STATEMENT SAYS CATEGORICALLY THAT THE AMERICAN DELEGATION SAID DURING THESE MEETINGS THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS DROPPED HIS OPPOSITION TO MEMBERSHIP IN THE UN.

A. THAT'S CORRECT. CORRECT.

18. Q. MR. PHAM HIEN ALSO SAID THAT THE VIETNAMESE SIDE DEMANDED IMMEDIATE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO AND HE INDICATED IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS THAT IN THEIR POINT OF VIEW THAT IS SEPARATE FROM THE ECONOMIC NEGOTIATIONS. THAT'S TO SAY THEY ARE ASKING THAT THE EMBARGO BE LIFTED BEFORE THE QUESTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. WHAT WAS THE AMERICAN RESPONSE TO THIS AND WHAT IS THE AMERICAN POSITION?

A. WELL, WITH REFERENCE TO THE TRADE EMBARGO, WE CONSIDER THAT TRADE IS A PART OF NORMAL RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM.

19. Q. DID YOU TELL THEM THAT?

A. YES.

20. Q. DOES THAT MEAN THAT YOU ARE NOT PREPARED TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT LIFTING THE EMBARGO UNTIL ALL OF THE THREE QUESTIONS OF THE MIAS, THE AID AND THE NORMAL RELATIONS HAVE ALL THREE BEEN RESOLVED?

A. WELL, I THINK I'D PREFER - IF WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE TRADE EMBARGO I'D LIKE TO DEAL WITH THE TRADE EMBARGO. TRADE IS PART OF NORMAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH VIETNAM.

21. Q. AND THAT STICKS. . .

A. THAT'S RIGHT.

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22. Q. WELL, THEN CAN WE ASSUME THAT THE TRADE EMBARGO IS BEING LIFTED?

A. I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GOT TO THAT POINT - NOT AT ALL. I CAN'T GET TO THAT POINT.

23. Q. ALRIGHT THEN - YOU SAID YOU SPOKE FOR SEVEN HOURS. NO FIGURES WERE MENTIONED. NO FIGURES WERE MENTIONED AT ALL. COULD YOU GIVE US BRIEFLY WHAT YOU TALKED ABOUT IF YOU DIDN'T GET SPECIFIC ABOUT THE AMOUNT OF AID THAT THEY FELT THAT THE UNITED STATES OWED THEM, AND THAT YOU FELT THAT TRADE RELATIONS WERE PART OF NORMAL RELATIONS THAT HADN'T ARRIVED YET.

A. WELL, I THINK THAT YOU HAVE FAILED TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE AMOUNT OF TIME THAT IS TAKEN UP IN TRANSLATION.

Q. CUT IT IN HALF. . .

A. WELL, WE TALKED ABOUT THE MANY ISSUES THAT CONCERNED US BOTH. WE TALKED ABOUT MIAS.

24. Q. CAN YOU TELL US WHAT WAS RESOLVED ABOUT MIAS. WHAT WAS THE VIETNAMESE RESPONSE TO OUR REQUEST THAT THERE BE SOME ACCOUNTABILITY AS TO THE MISSING AMERICANS?

A. WELL, THE VIETNAMESE EXPLAINED TO US THEIR EFFORTS TO OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MIAS. THEY INDICATED THEIR INTENTION TO STEP UP THEIR EFFORT IN THIS REGARD, AND WE NOTED THAT WITH APPRECIATION. IN ADDITION TO THAT, OUR MIA EXPERT FROM WASHINGTON WAS WITH US, AND THE VIETNAMESE MIA MAN WITH THEM AND THEY HAD USEFUL CONVERSATIONS.

25. Q. DID THEY ADMIT TO HAVING SOME INFORMATION AVAILABLE NOW ABOUT MISSING AMERICANS?

A. THERE WAS AN EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN UNCLASSIFIED

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US, BOTH WAYS, BUT NO NEW NAMES CAME UP.

26. Q. MR. PHAM HIEN ALSO SAID THAT SINCE THE WOODCOCK MISSION, TWO OR THREE CASES OF IDENTIFICATION HAVE BEEN FORWARDED TO WASHINGTON. IS THAT CORRECT AND WAS IT TWO OR THREE?

A. NOT QUITE. BUT THEY HAVE PROVIDED US WITH, SINCE THE WOODCOCK MISSION AND AS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE WOODCOCK MISSION, THEY HAVE PROVIDED US WITH SOME INFORMATION.

27. Q. HOA MANY?

A. OKAY, YOU RECALL THAT THE WOODCOCK MISSION CAME BACK WITH THE REMAINS OF 12 PEOPLE. ELEVEN OF THOSE HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS AMERICANS. ONE WAS A VIETNAMESE AND THAT WILL BE RETURNED IN DUE COURSE. IN ADDITION TO THAT, ROUGHLY THE MIDDLE OF APRIL, THE VIETNAMESE PROVIDED US WITH THE NAME OF ANOTHER AMERICAN AND INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD MAKE HIS REMAINS AVAILABLE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

28. Q. CAN YOU SAY IF THAT WAS ARMY OR AIR FORCE?

A. I DON'T BELIEVE THE VERIFICATION PROCESS IS COMPLETE AT THIS POINT, SO I CAN'T PROVIDE THAT. AND THEY PROVIDED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION - MORE DETAILS - ABOUT OTHER, WELL PAST CASES IN THIS NEW MECHANISM THAT WAS ESTABLISHED BY THE WOODCOCK MISSION.

29. Q BUT ONLY ONE NEW NAME SO FAR?

A. ONE NEW NAME, YES THAT'S RIGHT.

30. Q. ANOTHER IMPORTANT QUESTION SINCE PHAM

HIEU WENT INTO SOME DETAIL ON WHAT THEIR POINT OF VIEW-

THE EFFORT TO OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION IS GOING TO INVOLVE.

FROM WHAT INFORMATION THE UNITED STATES HAS, HOW

MUCH HAVE THEY ALREADY DONE IF THEY DECIDED TOMORROW TO

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GIVE ALL THEY HAVE GOT. HOW MUCH HAVE THEY GOT? AND

HOW MUCH LONGER - HOW MUCH MORE COMPLICATED IS IT GOING

TO BE ON THEIR SIDE TO BE IN A POSITION TO GIVE MORE?

A. WELL, ITS IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW JUST WHAT THE - WITH ANY

PRECISION AT ALL - JUST HOW DIFFICULT IT'S GOING TO BE.

WE THINK THEY HAVE MORE INFORMATION. WE BELIEVE

THEY CAN OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION AND THEY HAVE INDICATED

THAT THEY ARE IN THE PROCESS OF TRYING TO DO SO. BUT

GIVEN THE NATURE OF THE TERRAIN, AND THE CONDITIONS OF

THE WAR, GIVEN OUR PAST HISTORY WITH MIAS RESULTING

FROM EVERY WAR WE HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN, WE JUST CAN'T

SAY WITH ANY PRECISION.

31. Q. WELL, FOR EXAMPLE, YOU SAID THAT ONE OF THE

THINGS THAT THEY COULD DO WOULD BE TO SPREAD WORD OUT

AROUND THE COUNTRY WHICH WOULD MEAN EITHER BY THE PRESS

OR THE RADIO TO TELL VILLAGERS TO TELL PEOPLE ALL OVER

TO BRING IN WHATEVER INFORMATION THEY HAD. HAVE THEY

ALREADY DONE THIS OR IS THAT SOMETHING THAT THEY MIGHT

BE EXPECTED TO DO AS A PART OF THE (WORD INAUDIBLE)?

A. I DONT KNOW WITH ANY CERTAINTY THE EXTENT TO WHICH

THEY HAVE DONE IT. THEY HAVE DONE IT - THEY MUST HAVE

DONE SOME OF THAT ALREADY TO HAVE OBTAINED WHAT INFOR-

MATION IS NOW AVAILABLE.

32. Q. WHY HAS THE UNITED STATES DECIDED AT THIS POINT

TO DROP ITS OPPOSITION TO VIETNAMESE MEMBERSHIP IN THE

UNITED NATIONS?

A. WELL FOR ONE, GENERALLY SPEAKING, WE BELIEVE IN UNI-

VERSALITY OF MEMBERSHIP.

33. Q. YOU ARE SUGGESTING THAT THE CHANGE IN

ADMINISTRATION IS A FACTOR OR A REASON FOR THE

CHANGE. .

A. WELL, THE NEW ADMINISTRATION BELIEVES IN UNIVERSALITY

OF MEMBERSHIP.

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34. Q. THERE IS NO RECIPROCAL GESTURE ASKED OF, OR

PLANNED BY, THE VIETNAMESE?

A. NO.

35. Q. WWA THERE LINKAGE IN YOUR TALKS OF THE LAST TWO DAYS BETWEEN THE VIETNAMESE WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE MORE INFORMATION ON THE MIAS AND THE U.S. PROMISE NOT TO OPPOSE VIETNAMESE APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNITED NATIONS?

A. THE MIA ISSUE WAS A FACTOR IN OUR DELIBERATIONS, BUT THERE WAS NO QUID PRO QUO KIND OF ARRANGEMENT.

36. Q. WAS THERE ANY QUID PRO QUO ARRANGEMENTS.

A. NO.

37. Q. WILL THERE BE ANY?

A. NO.

38. Q. YOU ARE OPPOSED TO THAT IN PRINCIPLE IN THESE TALKS?

A. WE DON'T BARGAIN.

39.Q. WHY ARE YOU SUSPENDING THE TALKS NOW?

A. THE TALKS AREN'T SUSPENDED - WE ARE EACH GOING TO GO BACK AND CONSULT OUR GOVERNMENTS AND SEE WHERE WE CAN GO FROM HERE. THEY ARE A LONG WAY FROM HOME AND WE ARE TOO, AND WE HAVE GONE AS FAR AS WE CAN GO RIGHT NOW. WE'LL DISCUSS OUR POSITIONS AND MEET AGAIN IN TWO WEEKS.

40.Q. WAS THERE A TACIT UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS?

A. WELL, WE BOTH AGREED WITH THE VIEW THAT NORMAL RELATIONS SHOULD BE OUR GOAL.

41. Q. WHAT ARE THE MAJOR OBSTACLES TO ORMAL UNCLASSIFIED

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RELATIONS AT THIS POINT?

A. IT'S DIFFICULT TO SAY; WE'LL HAVE TO SEE HOW EACH GOVERNMENT EVALUATES WHAT WENT ON TODAY, AND WE'LL KNOW IN A FEW WEEKS WHERE WE CAN GO FROM HERE.

42. Q. WOULD YOU MAKE ANY KIND OF COMMENT ABOUT AID. I KNOW YOU SAID WE ARE NOT GOING TO GIVE YOU SO MUCH MONEY; THERE WERE NO FIGURES MENTIONED. DID YOU EVEN INDICATE THAT THERE WAS SOME HOPE FOR THE FUTURE, THAT THERE WOULD BE SOME AID FORTHCOMING. DID YOU GIVE THEM SOME GROUND FOR. . .

A. WE MADE NO COMMITMENTS.

43. Q. JUST ONE MORE QUESTION. IN WHAT WAY WILL NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VIETNAM AND THE UNITED STATES AFFECT THE BALANCE OF FORCES BETWEEN THE EAST AND THE WEST?

A. I'M AFRAID THAT'S A BIT OVER MY HEAD. I'M NOT IN A POSITION TO ANSWER THAT ONE, I'M SORRY.

44.Q. ON THE QUESTION OF AID, DID YOU DISCUSS FORMS? THAT IS TO SAY, CREDITS, LOANS, GRANTS, WHETHER ANY PARTICULAR TYPE WAS REQUIRED, DID THEY SAY THAT IT HAD TO BE GRANTS OR DID THEY SAY THEY WERE PREPARED TO DISCUSS ANY KIND OF AID?

A. WELL, I DON'T THINK IT'S APPROPRIATE FOR US TO DISCUSS WHAT THEY SAID. WE MADE NO COMMITMENTS WITH REGARD TO AID. WE POINTED OUT THE PROBLEMS THAT WE HAVE LEGISLATIVELY; WE POINTED OUT THE PRESIDENT'S MARCH 24 PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT ON AID. WE NOTED THE VARIOUS TYPES OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE THAT ARE PROVIDED BY PRIVATE AMERICAN GROUPS TO VIETNAM WHICH RECEIVE APPROVALS FROM THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, AND WE NOTED THE CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS THAT THE UNITED STATES MAKES WHICH, IN PART, BECOME AVAILABLE TO VIETNAM.

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45. Q. MR. SMITH, COULD YOU TELL ME EXACTLY WHAT OBSTACLES NOW REMAIN BEFORE NORMAL RELATIONS CAN BE ESTABLISHED? WHAT ARE YOUR MAIN HURDLES?

A. I DON'T SEE ANY MAJOR HURDLE AT THIS POINT AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED.

46.Q. WHAT ARE YOUR MINOR OBSTACLES? THERE MUST BE SOME OBSTACLES? WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES ON THE VIETNAMESE SIDE?

A WELL, I THINK THEY'VE EXPRESSED THEMSELVES ALREADY ON THAT.

47.Q. DO YOU FEEL THEY ARE LINKING, SHALL WE SAY AID OR CREDITS - TO THE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS.

A. WELL, THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN. THEY HAVE EXPRESSED A LINKAGE. JUST HOW SERIOUS THAT IS REMAINS TO BE SEEN. I DON'T KNOW.

48.Q. DO YOU SEE THE LINKAGE. . . ?

A. WE DON'T BELIEVE, FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, THAT THERE SHOULD BE ANY PRECONDITIONS FOR RELATIONS.

49.Q. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE MIA QUESTION AS AN OBSTACLE?

A. WE FEEL THAT AS OUR RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPS, REGARDLESS OF WHAT FORM IT MAY TAKE, THE MIA ISSUE - CONTINUED PROGRESS WITH REGARD TO THE MIAS - IS ESSENTIAL. IT'S A CONTINUING PROCESS THAT WILL HAVE TO BE UNDERWAY REGARDLESS OF THE RELATIONSHIP WE HAVE.

50.Q. HAVEN'T YOU GIVEN THE MIA ISSUE A CERTAIN TIME LIMIT OR IS THIS JUST GOING TO GO ON INDEFINITELY?
A. WELL, THE FRENCH ARE STILL GETTING MIAS BACK WHAT - 27 YEARS AFTER THE WAR. WHY SHOULD WE EXPECT THAT THEY'D BE BACK THAT MUCH SOONER?

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51. Q. ARE THERE ANY ARTICLES OF THE VIETNAM AGREEMENT THAT THE UNITED STATES REGARDS AS STILL OPERATIVE? AT THIS POINT?
A. WELL, I THINK THAT'S A MATTER - I'M NOT GOING TO LOOK AT THE PAST. OUR INTENTIONS ARE FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE - AND THAT'S TALKING ABOUT HISTORY.

52. Q. DID YOU DISCUSS FROZEN ASSETS, BOTH AMERICAN FROZEN ASSETS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND VIETNAMESE FROZEN ASSETS IN THE UNITED STATES?
A. I DON'T BELIEVE THE ISSUE CAME UP, BUT IF IT DID IT WAS IN A VERY MINOR WAY. BUT I DON'T THINK IT CAME UP IN ANY SIGNIFICANT WAY.
53.Q. IS THERE A FIGURE ON U.S. ASSETS IN VIETNAM?
A. I'D HAVE TO LOOK INTO THAT. I DON'T HAVE IT AT MY FINGERTIPS. I THINK THAT TOO IS QUITE IMPRECISE.

54.Q. MR. SMITH, YOU SAY THAT THE U.S. POSITION IS THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO PRECONDITIONS. WAS IT DURING THESE A VIETNAMESE POSITION THAT THERE ARE PRE-CONDITIONS? DO THEY STILL HAVE PRECONDITIONS FOR RELATIONS?
A. I DON'T THINK I SHOULD EXPLAIN THE VIETNAMESE POSITION THEY ARE IN A BETTER POSITION TO DO THAT THAN ANYONE ELSE. I THINK WE HAVE REACHED A POINT WHERE WE HAVE HAD A GOOD SERIES OF TALKS. WE ARE GOING BACK TO OUR GOVERNMENTS TO SEE WHERE WE CAN GO FROM HERE. AS I SAID, THE ATMOSPHERE WAS A GOOD ONE, THE TALKS WERE DEFINITELY CONSTRUCTIVE, WE MADE SOME PROGRESS AND WE ARE HOPEFUL ABOUT THE FUTURE.

55.Q. IS IT LIKELY THAT DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WILL BE ESTABLISHED AND THEN THE OUTSTANDING ISSUES WHICH WE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING NOW, WILL BE PLAYED OUT AT THE LEVEL OF THE TWO EMBASSIES? IS THAT A POSSIBILITY?
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A. YOU ARE ASKING ME TO LOOK INTO A CRYSTAL BALL. I JUST DON'T HAVE ONE.

56.Q. LET ME GO BACK TO MY OTHER QUESTION. DID THE

OTHER SIDE RAISE ANY POINTS OF THE VIETNAMESE PEACE AGREEMENT DURING THESE TALKS?

A. IT CAME UP ONLY ONCE IN A VERY TANGENTIAL WAY. IT WAS NOT AT ALL OF SIGNIFICANCE.

57.Q. CAN YOU SAY WHAT WAY?

A. NO.

58.Q. YOU SAY THAT PROGRESS ON THE MIAS IS NOT A PRE-CONDITION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS?

A. WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD HAVE CONTINUING PROGRESS ON THE MIA ISSUE, AND WE BELIEVE THE VIETNAMESE INTEND TO PROVIDE THAT INFORMATION. THEY HAVE GIVEN EVERY INDICATION THAT THEY INTEND TO DO SO. THEY STATED AT THIS MEETING, PARTICULARLY, THAT THEY WILL STEP UP THEIR EFFORTS.

59.Q. I'M JUST TRYING TO BE SURE I UNDERSTAND SOMETHING YOU SAID EARLIER. YOU SAID . . . PROGRESS IS ESSENTIAL REGARDLESS OF THE STATE OF RELATIONS. ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT CONTINUED PROGRESS IS NOT A PRECONDITION FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS? I JUST WANT TO MAKE SURE I UNDERSTAND YOU CORRECTLY.

A. WE ARE NOT SETTING UP ANY PRECONDITIONS. AT THE SAME TIME, EVERYTHING WE DO WITH VIETNAM, IN OUR VIEW, SHOULD INCLUDE CONTINUING EFFORTS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON MIAS. AND THEY ARE DOING THAT RIGHT NOW; THAT IS A SYSTEM THAT IS WORKING QUITE WELL.

60.Q. HOW LONG DO YOU THINK THESE TALKS WILL GO ON BEFORE THEY ARE SUCCESSFUL OR BEFORE THEY BREAK OFF?

A. I HAVE NO IDEA, NO ONE HAS ANY IDEA. IT CAN'T BE UNCLASSIFIED

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PREDICTED.

61. Q. DO YOU THINK THEY WILL GO AS LONG AS THE ORIGINAL PEACE TALKS?

A. I HOPE NOT. I DOUBT IT. I JUST DON'T KNOW.

62.Q. ARE YOU SATISFIED THAT THE VIETNAMESE SIDE IS GOING EVERYTHING IT CAN TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE MIAS?

A. WELL, I THINK WE HAVE SEEN INDICATIONS THAT THEY ARE MAKING A SERIOUS EFFORT. THEY TOLD US TODAY AND YESTERDAY THAT THEY WOULD STEP UP THAT EFFORT AND WE WELCOME THAT STATEMENT.

63. Q. WAS THERE ANY DISCUSSION OR WAS THE SUBJECT BROUGHT UP OF ANY POSSIBILITY OF LIAISON MISSIONS AS A STEP TOWARD FULL . . . ?

A. THAT WAS NOT DISCUSSED.

64.Q. DO YOU EXPECT ALL THE ISSUES, EVEN THOUGH THERE ARE NO PRECONDITIONS, ALL THE ISSUES TO BE. . .LET'S PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, DO YOU EXPECT THESE TALKS TO CONTINUE UNTIL ALL THE ISSUES ARE RESOLVED OR WILL SOME OF THEM JUST BE RESOLVED AFTER NORMALIZATION?

A. I REALLY CAN'T SAY. THAT'S ANOTHER CASE OF CRYSTAL BALL GAZING. THERE'S NO - NOBODY COULD SPEAK TO THAT ONE.

65.Q. COULD YOU GIVE US OTHER TOPICS THAT WERE DISCUSSED WITH THE VIETNAMESE APART FROM MISSING IN ACTIONS. YOU STARTED TO TELL US AND THEY YOU STARTED SORT OF TO CONCENTRATE ON MIAS. COULD YOU TELL US. . .

A. I THINK THE BASIC TOPICS HAVE BEEN STATED BY THE VIETNAMESE IN THEIR STATEMENT, AS I UNDERSTAND IT.

66.Q. CAN YOU TELL US EXACTLY HOW MANY MIAS THERE ARE?

A. WELL, APPROXIMATELY. I DON'T HAVE THE PRECISE FIGURES UNCLASSIFIED

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THE FIGURE WE USED WHEN WE WENT TO HANOI WAS APPROXIMATELY 2550. THAT INCLUDES PEOPLE ARE ARE MISSING BUT NO INFORMATION ABOUT THEM AT ALL, AND THOSE MISSING WHO ARE PRESUMED DEAD, BELIEVED DEAD, BUT WHOSE REMAINS HAVEN'T BEEN RECOVERED. SO THE LARGER FIGURE THAT WE ARE INTERESTED IN IS ROUGHLY 2550.

67.Q. THIS IS ONLY VIETNAM - NOT THE WHOLE OF INDOCHINA?

A. NO, I'M TALKING ABOUT THE WHOLE OF INDOCHINA. ON VIETNAM I DON'T HAVE THE PRECISE FIGURE.

68. Q. VIETNAM WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY SMALLER?

A. IT WOULD BE LESS THAN THAT.

69. Q. HAS HANOI BEEN HELD RESPONSIBLE, OR EXPECTED TO COOPERATE, IN THE FIGURES FOR LAOS? IN THE NAMES FOR LAOS?

A. I THINK THE VIETNAMESE FEEL THAT LAOS SHOULD BE HANDLING ITS OWN MIA PROBLEM. AS YOU KNOW, WE WENT TO VIENTIANE SPECIFICALLY TO TALK TO. . .

70. Q. DOES THE U.S. ACCEPT, THAT IT'S BETWEEN VIENTIANE AND WASHINGTON AND NOT. . .?

A. WELL, AT THIS POINT, IN VIEW OF THEIR VIEW OF HOW TO HANDLE THE ISSUE - WELL, WE'D LIKE TO GET INFORMATION THE BEST WAY POSSIBLE, AND WE'LL SEEK IT OUT AS BEST WE CAN

71. Q. COULD YOU BREAK DOWN THE 2550 AS TO HOW MANY YOU HAVE SOME INFORMATION ON AND. . .?

A. WELL, I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T THINK THIS WAS GOING TO BE A DETAILED MIA BRIEFING. I WOULD HAVE BROUGHT MY OTHER BOOK. APPROXIMATELY 750 AS I UNDERSTAND IT, AND THIS IS ALL OF INDOCHINA. APPROXIMATELY 750 ARE MIAS

ABOUT WHOM THERE IS NO INFORMATION AT ALL. AND THE
REMAINDER OF THAT 2550 ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE PRESUMABLY
DEAD. I'VE GOT IT, I JUST DON'T HAVE IT IN FRONT OF ME.
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I CAN GIVE IT TO YOU EASILY ENOUGH.

72.Q. IT MUST HAVE COME UP IN THAT FORM DURING THOSE
TALKS?

A. THE NUMBERS HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO BOTH SIDES FOR QUITE A
WHILE. I JUST DON'T HAVE THEM IN FRONT OF ME RIGHT NOW.
THERE'S NO MYSTERY ABOUT IT - I'LL GET YOU THE NUMBERS
RIGHT AFTER THE MEETING'S OVER.

73. Q. COULD WE COME BACK TO THE LIFTING VETO OF THE UN
FOR A MOMENT? SINCE THIS WAS, AS YOU DESCRIBED IT, A
UNILATERAL DECISION BY THE UNITED STATES, BASED ON
AMERICAN POLICY, WHY CHOSE TO ANNOUNCE IT HERE NOW?

A. WHYCHOOSE TO ANNOUNCE IT HERE NOW? I CAN'T
THINK OF A BETTER PLACE TO ANNOUNCE IT. YOU KNOW, IN
CONNECTION WITH OUR TALKS WITH THE VIETNAMESE, IT'S
CERTAINLY RELEVANT. AND THE VIETNAMESE HAVE ALWAYS CON-
SIDERED IT ONE OF THE OBSTACLES ON THE PATH TO
NORMALIZATION.

74.Q. MR. SMITH, MAY I COME BACK TO THE OTHER OBSTACLE
THAT THEY LIST: THE QUESTION OF THE ECONOMIC EMBARGO.
I DIDN'T REALLY UNDERSTAND YOUR ANSWER TO MY PREVIOUS
QUESTION ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A CHANGE IN THE
AMERICAN POSITION ON THE EMBARGO. THERE ALREADY HAS
BEEN ONE ADJUSTMENT IN THE EMBARGO. IS IT POSSIBLE YOU
CAN SEE OTHER ADJUSTMENTS IN THE AMERICAN POSITION, IN
THE AMERICAN EMBARGO BEFORE COMPLETE NORMALIZATION OF
RELATIONS?

A. WELL, I'M NOT GOING TO MAKE ANY PREDICTIONS, BUT OUR
BASIC VIEW IS THAT, YOU KNOW, THE LIFTING OF THE EMBARGO
IS PART AND PARCEL OF THE NORMALIZATION PROCESS.

75.Q. I WAS ASKING ABOUT ADJUSTMENTS. .?

A. WELL, I KNOW OF NO ADJUSTMENTS IN THE WORKD RIGHT NOW.

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UYM 1. WOULD YOU PLEASE DEFINE WXACTLY WHAT YOU MEAN BY
NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS?

A. NORMALIZATION, IN COMMON PARLANCE, MEANS ESTABLISHMENT
OF DIPLOMATIC RELATION, AND EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS.
OF EMBASSIES.

7. Q. DO YOU EXPECT AN EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS BEFORE THE

END OF THIS YEAR?

A. WELL, IF I KNEW WHEN WE WOULD BE ABLE TO NORMALIZE I'D BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO ANSWER THAT.

78. Q. DO YOU EXPECT THE TRADE EMBARGO TO LAST UNTIL THERE'S AN EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS?

A. WE FEEL THAT TRADE IS A PART OF THE NORMAL RELATIONS THAT WE MIGHT ESTABLISH WITH VIETNAM.

79. Q. DID THE VIETNAMESE REPEAT THE STATEMENT MADE LAST WEEK THAT THEY WOULD GRANT CONCESSIONS TO AMERICAN COMPANIES FOR OFFSHORE EXPLORATION; DID THAT COME UP AT ALL;

A. I DON'T RECALL ANY STATEMENT TO THE EFFECT THAT THEY WOULD GRANT CONCESSIONS TO AMERICAN OIL COMPANIES, NO.

80.Q. DID THE QUESTION OF EXPLORATION BY AMERICAN COMPANIES COME UP?

A. IT CAME UP, YES.

81. Q. CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE MORE ABOUT HOW IT CAME UP, WHAT THE RESULTS WERE?

A. IT WAS NOT A POLICY STATEMENT, IT WAS REALLY AN INQUIRY AS TO WHAT WE KNEW ABOUT THE DETAILS OF AMERICAN INTEREST. IT WAS NOT A STATEMENT OF POLICY, LIKE WE WOULD DO SUCH AND SUCH.

82.Q. THAT IS, VIETNAM WAS INQUIRING OF THE UNITED STATES WHAT YOU KNEW ABOUT THE OIL PLANS?
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A. YES.

83. Q. I DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT. DID YOU MAKE A STATEMENT TO THEM ABOUT THE OIL EXPLORATION, OR DID THEY MAKE A STATEMENT TO YOU?

A. THEY RAISED THE ISSUE TO US.

84. Q. WHAT DID THEY SAY.

A. I DON'T THINK IT'S APPROPRIATE TO GO INTO THAT KIND OF DETAIL AT THIS POINT.

WELL, THANK YOU.

END TEXT.

GAMMON UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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